



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

SENATE—Wednesday, April 28, 1999

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Father, the day stretches out before us filled with opportunities and responsibilities. There also are pressures and problems, stresses and strains, fears and frustrations. We commit the day to You, Father. There are vital things we know that You will never do. You will never give us more than we are able to carry. You will never leave or forsake us, and You will not let us drift from Your care. And there are some reassuring things that we can count on You to do. You will supply us with strength for each challenge, wisdom for each decision, enabling love for each relationship. We claim Your promise, "I will be with you; I will comfort and uplift you; I will show the way."

Thank You for being our Light in darkness, our Peace in turmoil, and our Security in distress. We praise You for giving us this new day and for showing us the way. Through the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12 noon. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 96, the Y2K bill. A cloture motion on the pending McCain amendment was filed on Tuesday. Therefore, that cloture vote will take place on Thursday at a time to be determined by the two leaders. All Senators will be notified when that time has been decided. Votes are possible today on any legislative or executive items cleared for action.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12 noon with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The distinguished Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank the distinguished Senator from Kansas very much for the recognition.

MUSIC IN OUR CULTURE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I have some comments I will make today following what has happened in Colorado, the Columbine tragedy that occurred this last week which has caused all of us really to reflect on the causes and the cures. As we mourn the loss of so many precious young lives, we really have to ask ourselves, how did we get to this place? Why do so many young people with so much going for them in their lives have such despair and so much hate?

Obviously, there are no easy answers and certainly no silver bullets. There are many factors which led those two young men to don trench coats and kill, just as there were many factors that resulted in the shootings in Jonesboro, Paducah, Pearl, and Springfield, communities the names of which have become all too familiar to us via school tragedies where a child has killed other children.

But there are enough common factors that I believe we can start to pull together some ideas as to what is causing this and some solutions. One of the most obvious conclusions is this: The immersion of troubled kids in a violence-glorifying culture is a recipe for disaster.

Monday, I addressed this body on the need for a commission on cultural renewal. Today, I would like to address the importance of one of the most important elements that makes up our culture, and that is our music. In many ways the music industry is more influential than anything that happens here in Washington. Most people spend far more time listening to music than watching C-SPAN or reading the newspaper. They are more likely to recognize musicians than Senators—I guess maybe unless the Senators sing. And they spend more time thinking about music than about government.

All of those can seem to be some fairly trite statements, but when you look at what we are putting out in the music and then ask that question, it takes on a different color.

Of course, no one spends more time listening to music than the young people. In fact, one recent study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation concluded that the average teenager listens to music around 4 hours a day—about 4 hours a day. In contrast, they spend less than an hour a day on homework or reading, less than 20 minutes a day talking with mom, and less than 5 minutes a day talking with dad.

If this study is true, there are thousands, perhaps even tens or hundreds of thousands, of teens who spend more time listening to the music of such artists as Marilyn Manson or Master P than mom or dad.

In fact, Marilyn Manson himself said this:

Music is such a powerful medium now. The kids don't even know who the President is, but they know what's on TV. I think if anyone like Hitler or Mussolini were alive now, they'd have to be rock stars.

Over the past few years, I have grown increasingly concerned with the popularity of some lyrics, lyrics which glorify violence and devalue life. Some recent best selling albums have included graphic descriptions of murder, torture, and rape. Women are objectified, often in the most degrading ways. Songs such as Prodigy's "Smack My B. . . Up" or "Don't Trust a B. . ." by